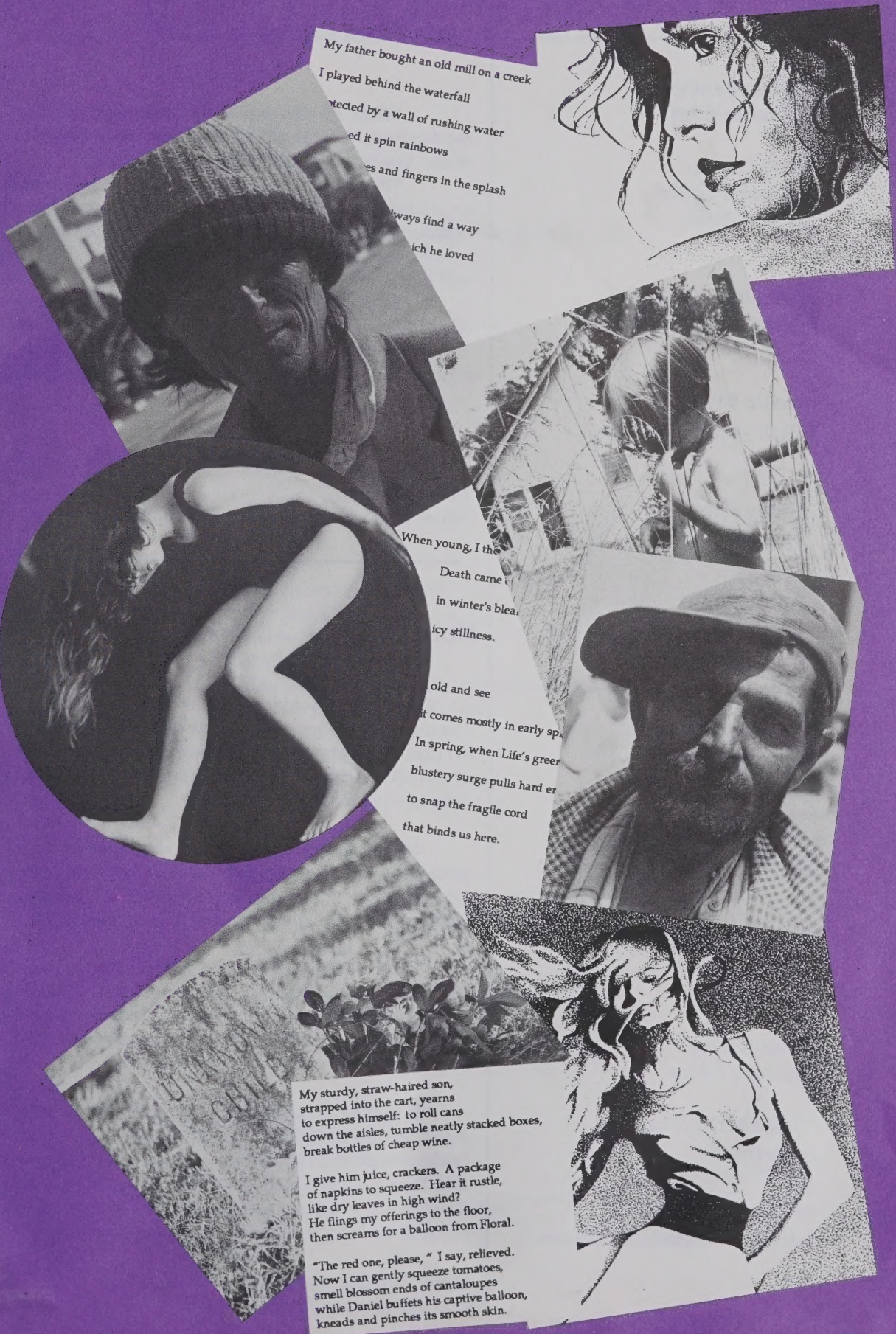


# KEYSTONE

AR  
30  
1991



My father bought an old mill on a creek  
I played behind the waterfall  
protected by a wall of rushing water  
ed it spin rainbows  
es and fingers in the splash  
always find a way  
ich he loved

When young, I thought  
Death came  
in winter's bleak  
icy stillness.  
old and see  
it comes mostly in early spring  
In spring, when Life's green  
blustery surge pulls hard  
to snap the fragile cord  
that binds us here.

My sturdy, straw-haired son,  
strapped into the cart, yearns  
to express himself: to roll cans  
down the aisles, tumble neatly stacked boxes,  
break bottles of cheap wine.

I give him juice, crackers. A package  
of napkins to squeeze. Hear it rustle,  
like dry leaves in high wind?  
He flings my offerings to the floor,  
then screams for a balloon from Floral.

"The red one, please," I say, relieved.  
Now I can gently squeeze tomatoes,  
smell blossom ends of cantaloupes  
while Daniel buffets his captive balloon,  
kneads and pinches its smooth skin.



**Terrie Bentley**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

**Beth Smith**  
*Assistant Editor*  
*Layout Artist*

**Angelina Korinis**  
*Photography Co-Editor*

**Leslie Bivens**  
*Photography Co-Editor*

**Emily Hinson**  
*Typesetter*

**James Baker**  
*Page Design*  
*Illustrator*

**Deborah Brogden**  
*Literary Editor*

**Christine Friedman**  
*Literary Editor*

**Thomas Henkel**  
*Literary Editor*  
*Illustrator*

**Lisa Kerley**  
*Literary Editor*

**John McMillian**  
*Illustrator*

**Mary Murchison**  
*Student Publications Adviser*

## Note from Editor-in-Chief

When a writer creates short stories or a poem, or an artist paints a masterpiece, there is always that faint glimmer of hope that one day the story, poem, or artwork will be published.

With that in mind, I welcome you to the Fifth edition of CPCC's creative arts magazine, *Keystone*. Many hours of hard labor went into the creation of *Keystone*, and it could not have been done without the work of a multi-talented staff. I hope each of you will find something in here that will be cherished.

In closing, I would like to personally thank a very good friend whom I have known since high school. To Beth Smith: Thank you for all your hard work this year, not only for the *Keystone*, but for other publications as well. You will be missed when you graduate!

Terrie Bentley  
Editor-in-Chief

---

## Note from the Adviser

The 1991 *Keystone* promises to be a feast for the senses: lyric, and humorous, even sensual, poetry; beautiful and provocative photography; art that stimulates the mind, that amuses us with a bit of whimsy, and that even touches the soul; and short stories that recall important memories of "characters" from a simpler time.

All of the work in *Keystone* was done by CPCC students and was judged by renowned judges in the Charlotte community. I encourage other students to submit their works of art, poetry, photography, fiction and non-fiction next spring and to be a part of the '92 *Keystone*.

The student staff of *Keystone* '91, led by the indefatigable efforts of our very talented Editor-in-Chief, Terrie Bentley, has worked hard and with much enthusiasm and creativity to produce this publication. As always, Beth Smith, our Assistant Editor and Layout Artist, has played a crucial role in the success of this publication.

It is truly a special experience for me to see the evolution of each *Keystone*: how a group of student volunteers, who come from a variety of backgrounds and with differing talents, come together, evolve into a team, and through both inspiration and perspiration produce a high-quality creative arts magazine. Welcome to *Keystone* '91. I hope you will enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed producing it.

Mary Murchison  
Adviser

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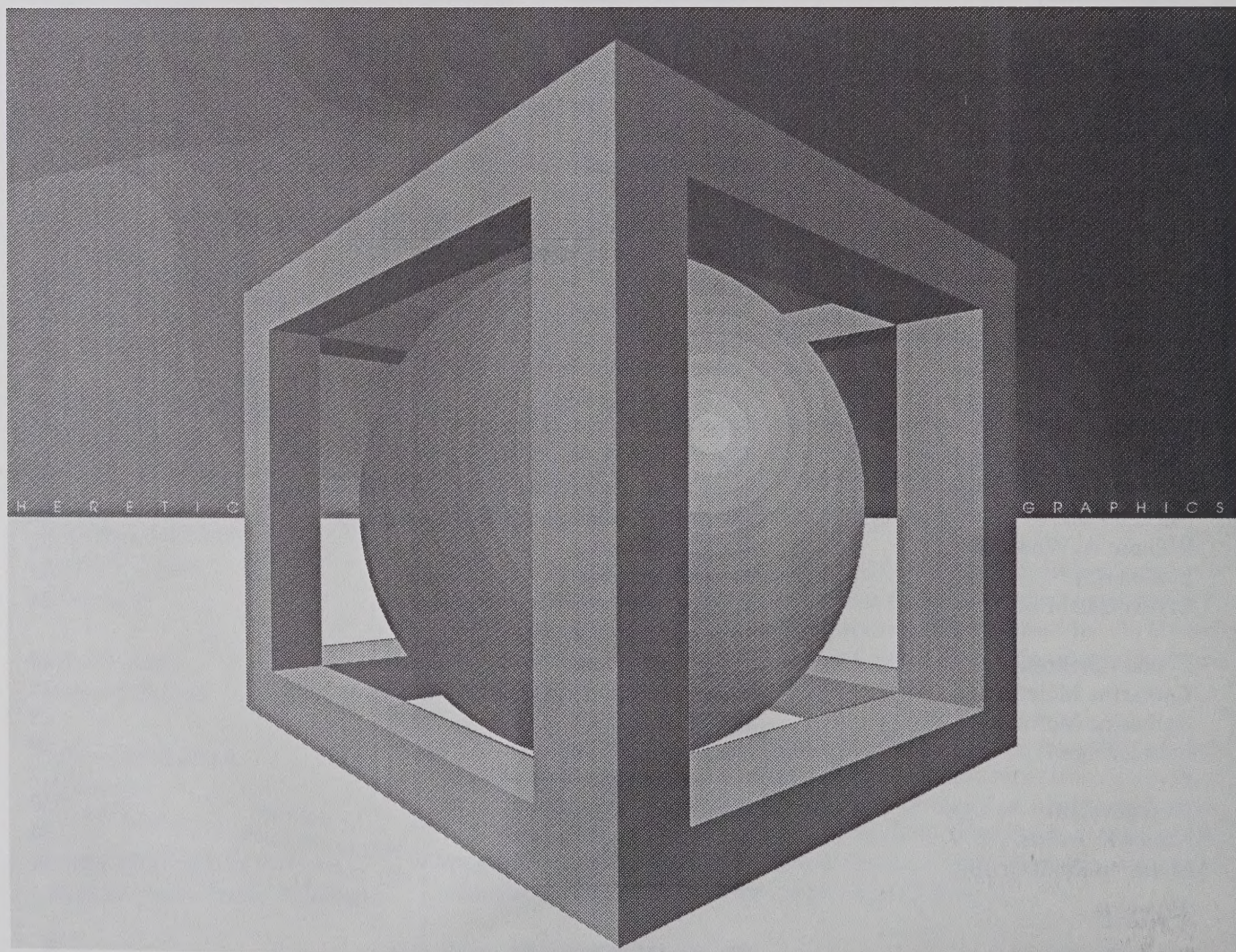
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-- *Keystone staff*

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## Untitled

---





# The Beachball

Terrie Bentley

**He** was really old, the neighbor down the street. Mom and Dad used to tell me that he was at least a hundred, maybe more. They said he was strange, weird; I wasn't supposed to talk to him or trick-or-treat his house.

I thought he looked OK, I mean, for someone that wrinkled. He had huge bags under his

**"The way Mr. Ben  
crossed  
the street,  
you'd think cars  
would stop  
for *him*,  
like the cars  
didn't  
matter."**

faint brown eyes and walked with a twisted cane that looked like the pictures of carved sticks in Dad's magazines he got every month. Mr. Ben—the old man—walked every morning and night, down the street and way down McQuister Boulevard to the bluffs. I know because I followed him.

I really didn't know

why he went to the bluffs; nor did I know why I followed him one morning when I should've gone to school. But, I had three tests, so I figured by the time the tests were done, the day'd be shot. So I missed the bus and snuck in Mrs. Gladys' bushes until Mr. Ben came out.

It was hot—I remember that—so hot my shirt stuck to my chest and back. He came out of his house, shut the door, petted his cat, and strolled down the walk where the grass was growing between the cracks. I watched him walk down the street and bravely cross the road without looking. I wouldn't have done that. Mom and Miss Fields (my teacher) said to always look both ways. The way Mr. Ben crossed the street, you'd think cars would stop for *him*, like the cars didn't matter. Curious, I crept out of the bushes and snuck to the curb. I looked both ways and ran across the street.

Mr. Ben was nearing the bluffs by the time I got to him and found a good hiding place. He walked right to the edge. The tips of his shoes hung over. I breathed hard—oh no, oh no! What if he falls? What if he has a stroke or a heart attack or indigestion, and collapses over the side?

He looked deep into the water below. The bluff was maybe thirty feet high, above water fifty feet deep. Once there was a fence, but Jake Kelmer and his red Mustang took it out one fateful day. At the bottom of the water there's a red Mustang.

Mr. Ben stretched and looked up at the clouds. I saw him take something out of his inside jacket pocket—a multicolored flat thing. He put one part in his mouth, and his cheeks became puffy, then flat. Puffy, flat. Puffy, flat.

It was a beachball! He blew up a beachball! All ceremony-like, he held it suspended over the bluff, to the water below. He dropped it.

Mr. Ben turned and walked back. I think I saw a huge smile erupt on his face. When he was gone and out of sight, I ran almost to the edge and looked over. I couldn't see much, just dirt. I got down on my stomach and scooted to the edge. Mom will have a fit when she sees me. Oh, but who cares? Dirt's dirt. It'll come out, just like in all those TV commercials—"These grass stains were in Jimmy's shirt for three years, and in one wash they were all out!"

The beachball bounced on the waters as the waves lapped the shore. I thought it was quite strange.

I never followed him after that. I don't know why. I guess something inside me just told me to leave him be.

*First place  
short story*



## "The Fox and the Unicorn"

Thomas Henkel

And the Fox asked of the Unicorn,  
"Which matters most of these:

- A-taking trips  
On shaking ships  
5 Or counting leaves on trees?"

- "Ah," the Unicorn replied,  
"It matters not, you see,  
For like as most  
With jam and toast,  
10 And what will be, will be."

- "But tell me, pray," the Fox persisted,  
His tail a wagging whisk,  
"Of crimson sands  
In foreign lands  
15 And following your risk."

- "Well," the hornéd beast began,  
"I mustneeds now confess,  
It is quite plain  
Your tumbling train  
20 Confuses your address."

- "By the sun and by the moon,  
And buy with paper green;  
I feel a churl,  
My head's a-whirl,  
25 Or is the earth inseeene?"

- "You so vex us, Vulphus;  
You are no philosophe.  
Do make your point  
Less out of joint;  
30 You've reached your end of rope.

- "Ah," the Fox so softly said,  
"It matters not, U.C.;  
We must away,  
We must make hay,  
35 Or we'll miss our high tea!"



---

## SHOW AND TELL

---

Maureen Ryan Griffin

"Don't go for a walk, Mommy.  
Stay with me."  
I have to pry you  
from my legs, Amanda,  
watch you pout  
as I walk out the door.

But the heartsease are  
in bloom, scenting the wind;  
I forget all about you till I spot  
a jay feather in the grass,  
blue side up.  
I take it home to give to you.

Do you forgive me now  
for leaving you? When I  
remind you over breakfast  
about Show and Tell,  
it's your feather  
you choose to take.

I think about you all morning,  
about that feather you put  
into a soapbox inside a lunch bag  
on the highest classroom shelf,  
so no one would see  
before Show and Tell time.

I wish I could watch you  
take your turn—  
you, born into this family  
with its dance  
of martyrdom and guilt  
passed on so faithfully

from mother to daughter  
for generations.  
You can't show  
the real gift, but the joy  
in your jay-blue eyes  
will tell.

---

## Bedtime Rituals

---

Lisa Arrington

Sing me a song mommy  
make the night go by.

Sing me a song mommy  
so that I won't cry.

Read me a book mommy  
I love to hear you speak.

Read me a book mommy  
I don't want to go to sleep

Rub my back mommy  
soothe me where I ache

Rub my back mommy  
Please, for my sake.

Sing to me mommy  
Read to me mommy

Rub my back mommy  
where I am sore.

I know that you're tired mommy  
I am too.

But just stay here  
a few minutes more.



## Daniel's First Poem

Maureen Ryan Griffin

My sturdy, straw-haired son,  
strapped into the cart, yearns  
to express himself: to roll cans  
down the aisles, tumble neatly stacked boxes,  
break bottles of cheap wine.

I give him juice, crackers. A package  
of napkins to squeeze. Hear it rustle,  
like dry leaves in high wind?  
He flings my offerings to the floor,  
then screams for a balloon from Floral.

"The red one, please," I say, relieved.  
Now I can gently squeeze tomatoes,  
smell blossom ends of cantaloupes  
while Daniel buffets his captive balloon,  
kneads and pinches its smooth skin.

The balloon squeaks in protest until  
its string works loose. Up it floats,  
bobbing indignantly against the ceiling.  
Torn from flowerets of broccoli, I call  
the stockboy, who mounts a ladder to retrieve it.

Daniel's pudgy hands waggle  
at its return. A cuff, a slap,  
an attempted bite.  
He'd eat it if he could.  
I pay and wheel the cart outdoors.

And now Daniel  
lets loose the string, grasps too late  
at empty air. His wails  
pierce the parking lot. His impotent fists  
smudge tears on his round cheeks.

I wave to the balloon,  
blow a kiss. But  
what brings the sudden laugh  
bubbling to his bowed mouth,  
his spontaneous clap of hands,

is the sight of that easy drift  
through sun-drenched sky,  
the crimson greeting that cerulean calm.  
His own doing: he has set  
the image free.





## Through The Out Door

---



*Second place  
photography*

**Leslie Bivens**

Keystone 9



# Krazy Golf, The Morning After The First Massive Air Attack On Iraq and Kuwait.

---

Lynda Calabrese

Even here in manicured playtime  
speakers blast radio's ballads,  
mixed with kid's cries for Daddies to come home  
from the desert and accounts of F-15's lost.  
My daughter hears of threats to Israel,  
says she's no longer Jewish.

She stuffs the score card  
and stubby pencil in her jacket pocket.  
They've come to play Krazy Golf  
as planned, on a day off from school.  
No one's keeping score.

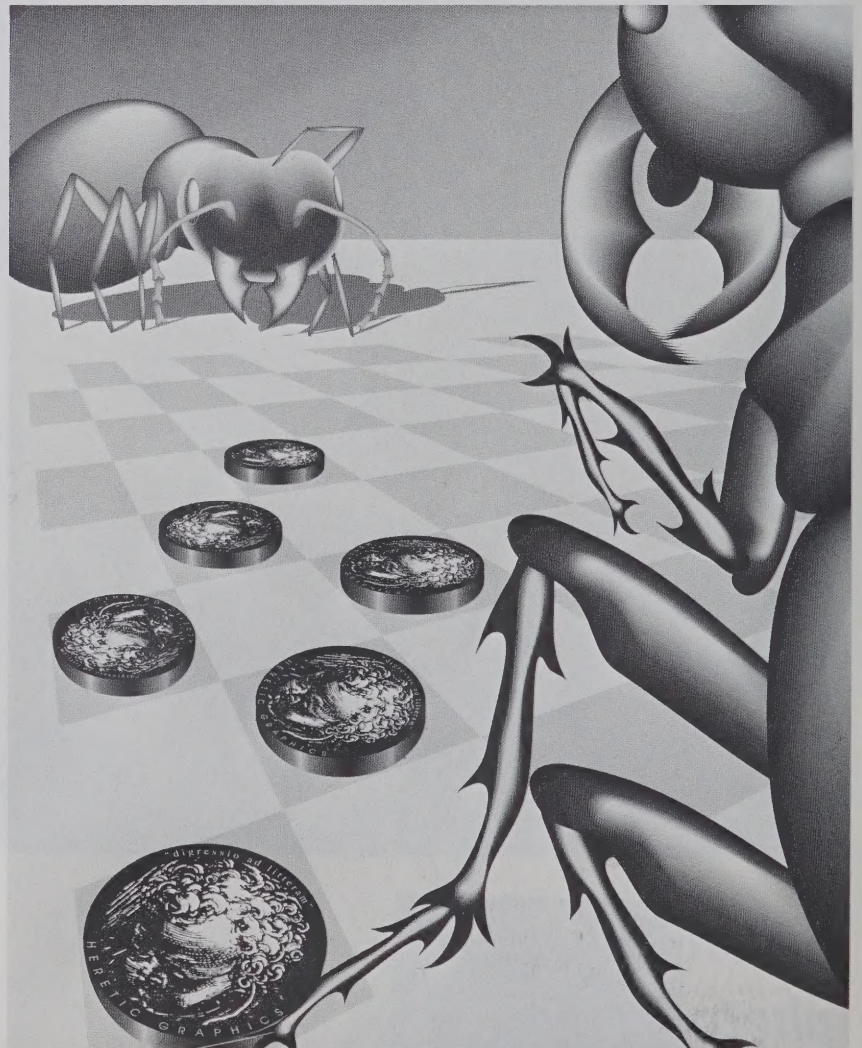
I sit here in the sun  
beside a giant orange and black python  
trying to make sense of this new war.  
The girls giggle as they putt  
colored balls on astro turf  
under the bobbing beak of an ostrich  
as hickory dickory docks.

At the end of the course waits  
the fiery cave.  
If its webbed entrance doesn't swallow  
your carefully aimed ball  
you win a free game, and keep playing.  
Like the fighter pilots last night  
with pumped up adrenalin  
who got to go back for a second hit.

We go inside  
where combat-sized boys  
blow up cities for fun.  
They play war games on a day off from school  
while in Tel Aviv children wear gas masks  
and prepare to make the Sabbath holy.

## Untitled

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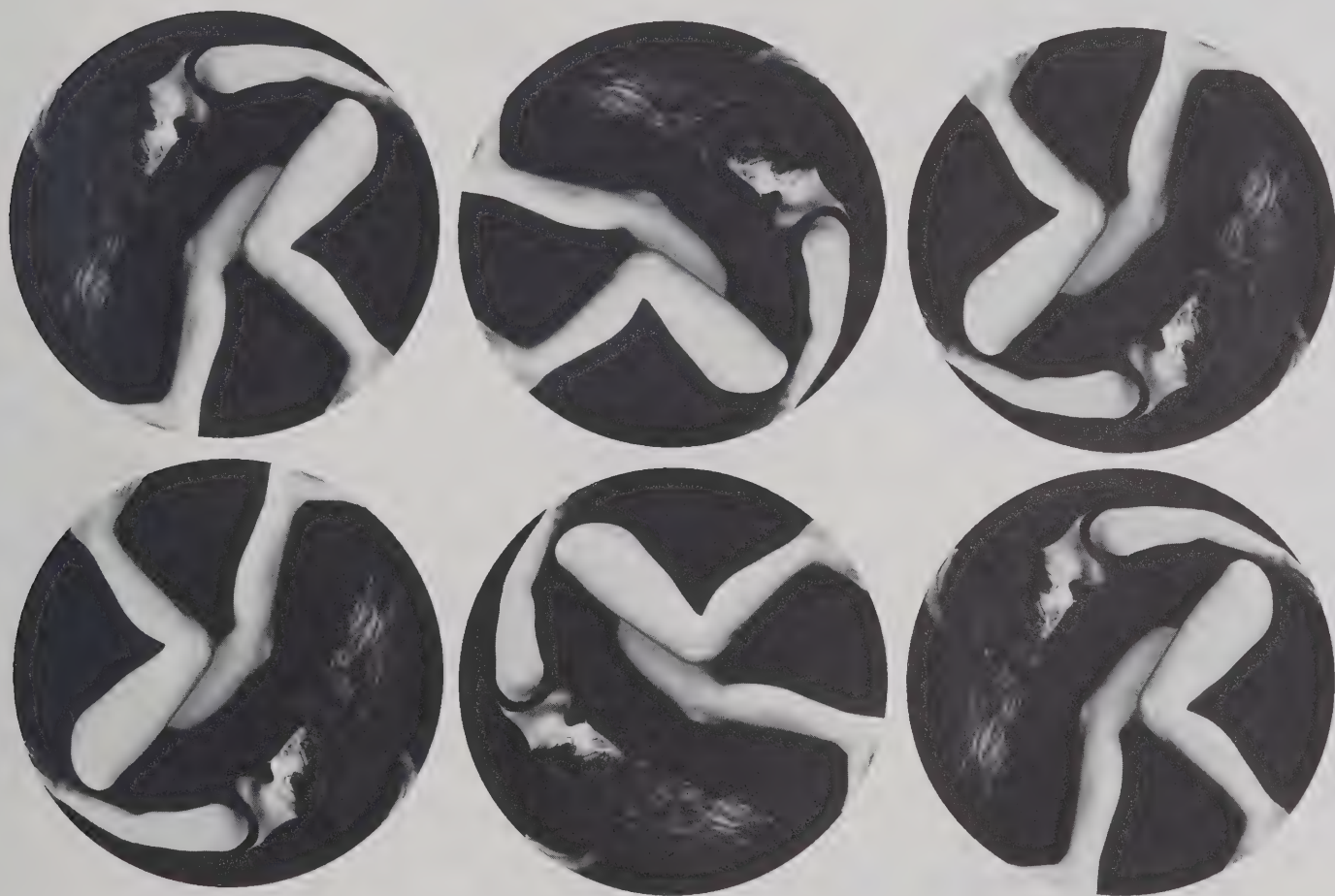




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## Circle

---



Leslie Bivens



## Misty Dream

James Baker

My eyes close  
as the sun sets  
vague visions dance  
  behind my eyes  
that's when we meet  
  to walk  
to stroll, together, along this wooden path

Two heartbeats to each step,  
sounding in perfect cadence,  
I pause and point toward the lake,  
to where the fog dips its toe  
to check the time  
  morning  
  still morning  
  always morning

She huddles close  
losing herself in my embrace  
locked in wonder and awe  
  then speaks

whereupon I reply;  
why yes  
you may,  
if you want  
to hold my hand.  
then silence.

and more silence,

and I nod my head  
in defeated acceptance,  
because we, as poets and dreamers, know  
only too well when journeys end

So as this dream fades  
she becomes a single, silver tear  
  which I wipe,  
but not away;  
instead it clings to me  
as I cling to her, always-  
My Misty Dream

## ONE DAY IN JUNE

Katherine McIntyre

the coin we pay for wisdom is gold  
  
hard come by  
  
minted through the chemistry of pain

I remember one day in June  
  
you and I alone on Wolf Mountain

coming suddenly upon a sheening  
pool

"let's go for a swim," you said

and whispered how

our naked flesh would merge with  
the licking stream

a man

a woman

intimate with water sun air rock and  
tree

I long for that day

to run time back

play it over again

and just be me

loved by you





**James Baker**

---

## **TRUE LOVE**

Houshang F. Ardekani

I love flowers

Because of their smell;

I love candles

Because of their beauty;

I love butterflies

Because of their freedom;

I love you,

But I don't know why!



## Ghosts

Lisa Kerley

Ghosts are in the apartment  
where I live—

They hang in the form  
of snapshots in the kitchen,  
They hang in the form  
of a toothbrush in the bathroom,  
They sit atop the betel can  
on my dresser  
and stare with catechu eyes.

Cruelest is the ghost  
who slips under my arm at night—  
only to turn into a pillow  
in the morning.

## Bridge and Rail



Ginger Mosley



## Untitled

---



Gordon Black

*First place  
photography*



## GROCERY SHOPPING

Mickey Furr

Could you help me, please?  
I've looked up and down each row  
on all the shelves high and low  
but can't find what I need.

Oh, I didn't say? Sorry, it's those airy words  
I want, the ones that make a poem rise high  
enough to show a dawn, a sigh,  
the sky-skimming flight of hummingbirds.

Yes, I've checked aisles one and four,  
found cans of meter, rhyme and simile  
and three tall jars of style, tone and synecdoche.  
These are good, but I need more.

For leavening, a muse is always added last.  
Greek or Roman, both work fine  
with poems that rise and shimmer in the mind  
but fall quite flat when brought to class.

You'll special order just for me?  
How kind you are!  
I'll always patronize your store  
and when they're done, will bring my poems for you to see.







David A. Mills Jr.





## "The Telephone"

Matt Brown

this wire in my head,  
and i become wires,  
jumbled concentric  
circuit boards where  
you pick, speaking  
to me with  
fingernails.

this wire in my head  
runs straight through,  
connected to god's  
other ear, starting  
here, traversing miles  
of cable to  
reach you.

this wire in my head,  
and i become wires,  
tired, tight, tangled  
jumble of wire, tense,  
and like that,  
i jangle and  
jump when you call.

## The last time I saw him

Maureen Ryan Griffin

he'd called to ask  
would I bring my can opener  
when I came to say goodbye.  
Said his cat needed food on the drive  
to Texas, where he was headed  
now that he'd decided  
not to marry me after all.

But I didn't want  
the cat to go hungry,  
I didn't want to say no  
this last chance I'd have  
to say anything.

When I walked in,  
the furniture was gone,  
his bubble light,  
his Frank Zappa poster.  
Even the kitchen junk drawer empty, but

I took it like a lady,  
kept my clenched fists  
in my pockets, asked  
about his trip. There wasn't much else to  
talk about, though  
we'd known each other  
all through college, those years since graduation  
when I'd moved down here to marry him.

Still I think I could forgive him  
if only his eyes hadn't filled  
as I was leaving, if he only hadn't  
pushed me out the door so I wouldn't see.  
If only, when I turned my key in the ignition,  
the radio hadn't played,  
"Well, I've been afraid of changing  
"Cause I've built my life around you. . ."  
If only the night  
hadn't swelled with magnolia.

\*from "Landslide" by Fleetwood Mac



# Why I Left You Alone in Bed Last Night

Maureen Ryan Griffin

Words                      n                      g                      my  
   i  
were                      p                      through  
   a  
   e                      head  
   l

   like a ballet corp  
   d                      i  
   a                      c                      n  
   n                      g  
   The Nutcracker

I told them  
   to be  
   quiet  
   that it was  
   time  
   to sleep

   I commanded  
   them to  
   line up,  
   orderly,  
   offstage

They  
insisted it was                      showtime



## LEARNING THE NATURE OF WILD THINGS

---

Mickey Furr

A safe backyard Eden for the birds, I think.  
Feeders filled with seeds,  
fresh water in the concrete bath,  
pines, apple, dogwoods, azaleas,  
apartments on poles.  
The Greeks called it hubris, this feeling I have  
as I watch the sparrows jockey for space on the feeders,  
admire the cardinals' red accents,  
the doves' shimmering grays  
splashed with plump, black commas.  
Suddenly a dark shape plummets down,  
gray wings flutter, then still,  
helpless in the grip of sharp talons.  
The hawk lifts off with its prize.  
The grass trembles.

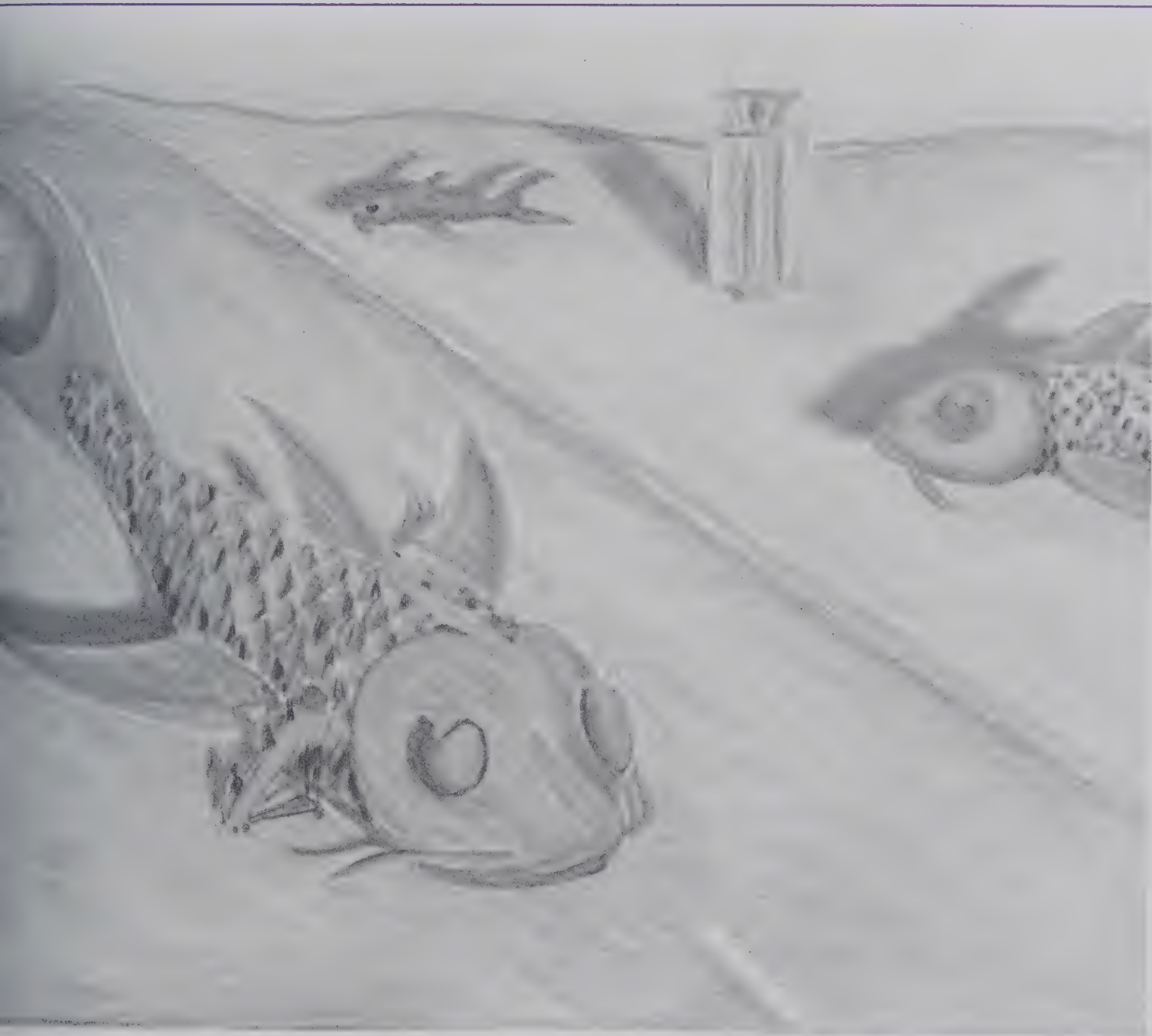
*First place  
poetry*

*First place  
artwork*



Now Serving Atlantis

---



David A. Mills Jr.



## Ripples of you

---

William A. Wharton

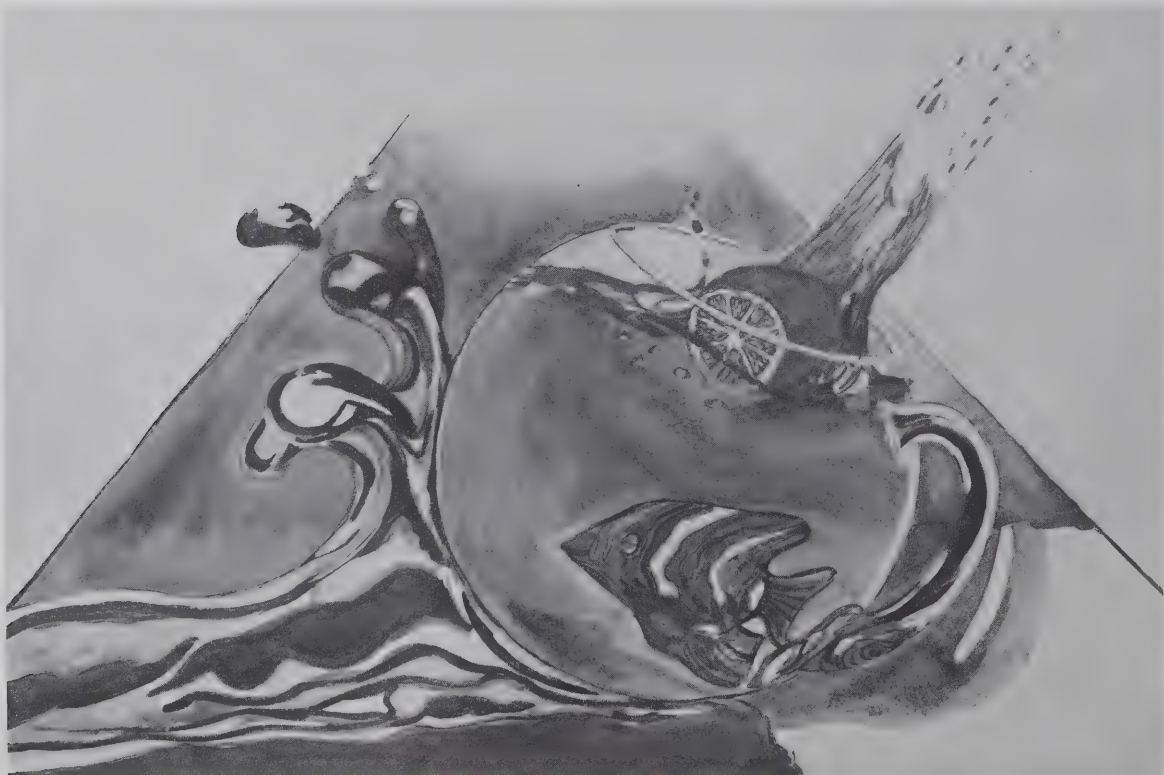
Ripples of you  
Ripples in my mind  
Ripples that grow till the waves begin  
Crashing, roaring, breaking . . . soaking everything

I wake on the shore - I've survived again  
Soaking wet and cold but, the tide is out  
I look and I know the tide will again come in  
The ripples remain here in this pool where still I lie

My limbs have no feeling, long ago ceased to move  
Can't close my eyes or turn my head  
I watch the ripples ebb and flow and grow  
waiting, knowing, ready for the coming of a storm

## Have A Little Lemon With Your Fish

---



Diane D. Sayess



## WEAVING RAGS

Lisa Kerley

Sometimes white smoke poured  
from the prison camp stacks—  
sometimes black.  
I wondered what the difference was, if any.

At shift change I watched them scatter,  
ants from a hill.  
I grew up wanting to run myself—  
from a place that breaks your back  
and bends your will  
and kills the soul the preacher  
sends to heaven or hell.  
The smoke stacks could block their sun  
but not mine. . .

The church told grandpa not to worry  
about the lint and the sweat and the dirt and the toil,  
there's a better day acomin' by and by.  
So long I believed it myself—  
so long I was convinced  
that you couldn't even  
blame the devil for your sins,  
so long I thought my soul was a filthy rag.

His religion cursed him for taking a drink  
and sometimes I did, too,  
because it was bad, like the preacher said.  
But worst of all he cursed himself  
for the sin of being human—  
For years, I thought he was bad.

There's no sympathy  
for a man who spends fifty-two years  
nailed to the cross of a machine  
if he slips out to take a drink to numb it all.  
Should he have listened closer to the sermon?  
He was told to lean on God—  
the church says if you backslide  
it's your own fault.  
In our town  
you couldn't even blame  
the devil for your sins.

They're still there weaving  
their souls into rags.

## PLAYING SCRABBLE WITH MY MOTHER

### a pantoum for waiting

Lynda Calabrese

I keep score, she checks my addition.  
We play by the rules, turn each letter, and laugh about cheating.  
We choose tiles like Tarot cards, spelling out what hurts to say.

It's just the way it's always been.  
We play with words, slip them into boxes of the most power.  
We choose tiles like Tarot cards, spelling out what hurts to say.  
Not trying hard to win or stump each other  
we even share a glass of ice water.  
I ignore the thought of her cells seeping into mine.

We play with words, slip them into boxes of the most power.  
I am her body fluids, her cells, her words.  
Not trying hard to win or stump each other  
we each make some smart moves  
as the words PAIN, DISTRESS, and LUCKY are spelled out  
as if by a Mystic.

I am her body fluids, her cells, her words  
It's better sometimes not to spell out everything.  
We each make some smart moves  
until I ruin the board with WHEN.

It's better sometimes not to spell out everything  
as we play and wait for the pathology report  
We play by the rules, turn each letter and laugh about cheating.  
until I ruin the board with WHEN  
and put us both in a corner.  
I keep score, she checks my addition.

*Second place  
poetry*





David A. Mills Jr.

## WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Lynda Calabrese

They watch Vanna,  
the goddess of daytime.  
My parents don't speak  
of today's biopsy  
or the pea sized cancer  
cut from her right breast.

I walk the circle  
of their condo pod.  
In protected carports  
Caddys and Lincolns wait  
where mildew grows on stucco walls  
while pale blue fungus creeps  
beneath the wealth  
of ficus and impatiens.

A new round.  
Surgery on Wednesday.  
The stakes change  
for all of us  
as the challenger takes a chance.  
Another spin of the wheel.

## THEY SAY YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

---

Katherine McIntyre

The Egyptians disagreed  
They filled the tomb with things a person loved

Now what would I like to take with me?

My "Leaves of Grass"?  
I couldn't read it  
An electric blanket?  
It wouldn't warm me  
Mini-blinds?  
Enough privacy already  
My Nikon camera?  
Dull prospect  
TV set? VCR?  
Big power problem  
A few friends?  
I think they'd politely decline  
My dog?  
He loves me but not that much  
A flashlight?  
The battery would die  
La Boheme? A little Mozart? Scott Joplin?  
I couldn't hear them  
Some Gouda cheese and crackers?  
They'd get stale  
A Hershey bar would be nice and well refrigerated  
But soon gone

So I've decided  
If I can't take it with me  
I'm not going





Tomoko Hayashi

## DEPRESSION, 1929

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Katherine McIntyre

My father bought an old mill on a creek  
I played behind the waterfall  
protected by a wall of rushing water  
I watched it spin rainbows  
stuck my toes and fingers in the splash

My father could always find a way  
the cotton business which he loved  
crashed  
so he sold insurance  
and bought a mill  
to farmers without money he said  
"Pay me with corn"

My father ground it into meal  
for our breakfast  
corn meal pancakes  
corn meal muffins  
corn on the cob  
corn meal grits  
corn meal mush  
corn fritters  
cornbread  
everything except corn whiskey

While many men were jumping out of windows  
my father got a mill and made us bread

### This Old House

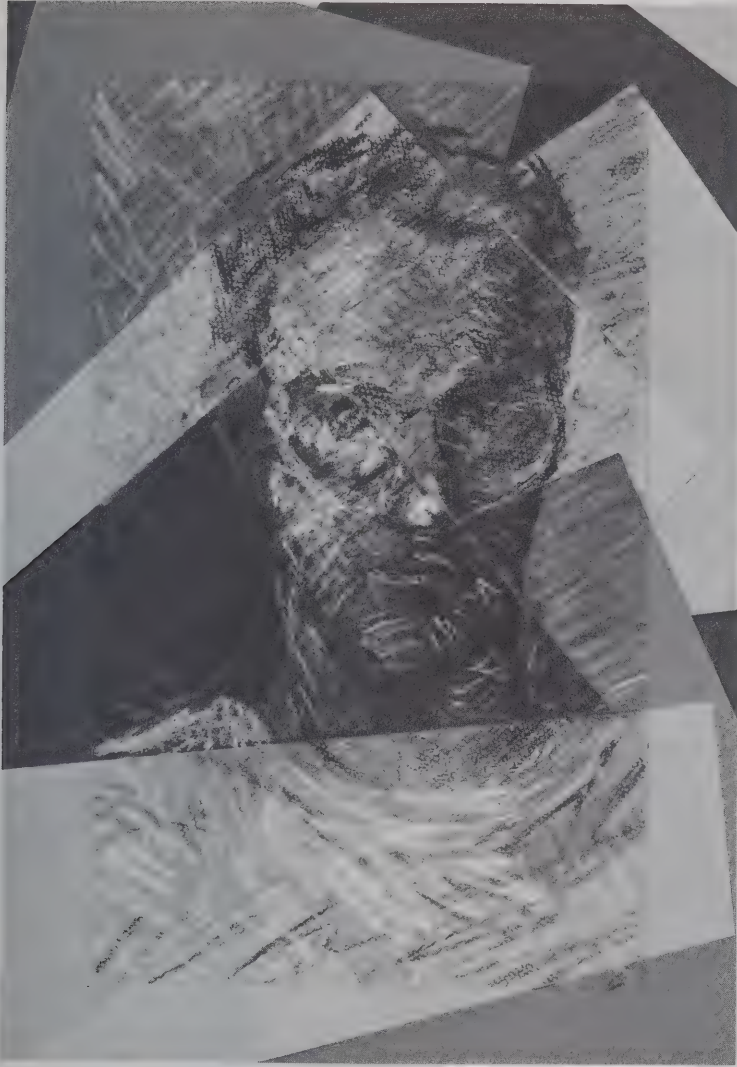
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Ginger Mosley



## Self - Portrait



Peter McRae

### THE LEGS GO FIRST

Anonymous Old Athlete

Paul Jernigan

My legs dream . . . . .

Happy dreams  
Bare feet in fresh plowed soil  
Naked toes in dew cooled grass  
A boy again

Carefree dreams  
Wading in a clear sandy creek  
Beneath green leafy boughs  
Escaping reality

Exhilarating dreams  
Striding through the foaming surf  
Riding a board on crashing breakers  
Straining for balance

Tense dreams  
Dangling beneath a parachute  
Floating down on treacherous mountains  
To fight Montana forest fires

Taut dreams  
Stretched out on a hang glide strut  
Silent updrafts lift smooth wings  
High over peaks and valleys

Rhythmic dreams  
Gliding smoothly on a ballroom floor  
Guiding my lover to a Strauss waltz  
Beauty in motion

Erotic dreams  
Muscular male legs against soft female ones  
Mates straining for that moment of ecstasy  
Spawning new life

Nightmare dreams  
Paralyzed in the dark filled night  
Unable to escape the approaching terror  
Fear engulfs me

Depressing dreams  
Painful muscles, bones, and joints  
Decreased capacity for action  
The essence of aging

Farewell dreams  
Six men behind a sealed coffin  
Walk silently  
To an open grave

A joyous dream  
Living throughout eternity  
After that happy reunion  
With all that I have known and loved.

## EARTH DAY

Paul Jernigan

In the beginning  
God created the earth  
Made man in his own image  
Gave us dominion over all  
and it was very good

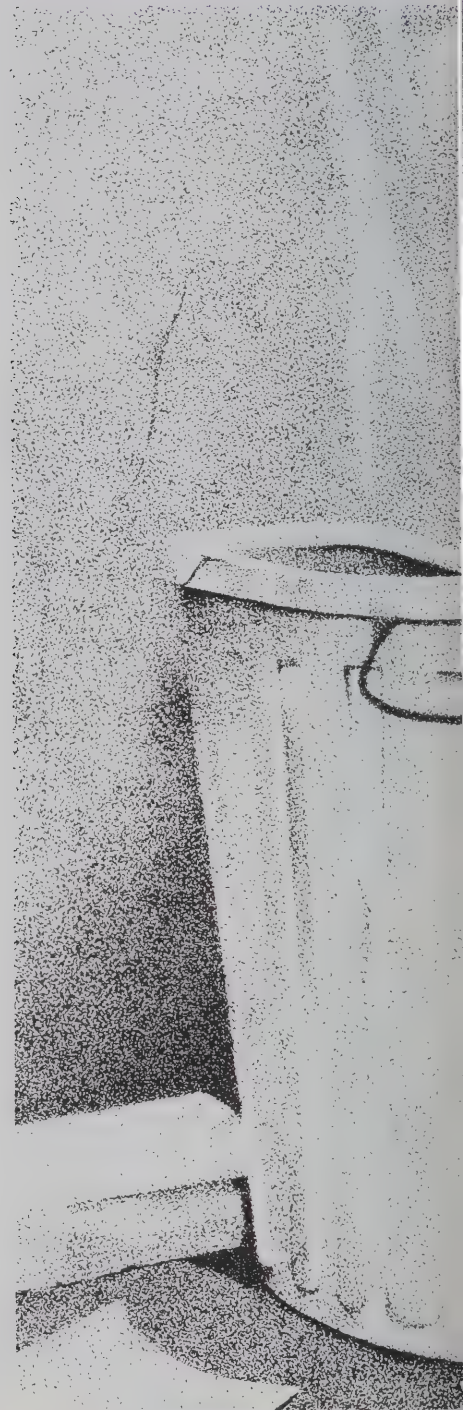
He commanded  
Be fruitful  
Replenish the earth  
Love God with all your might  
Your neighbor as yourself

Forgive us Lord  
Help us save ourselves

We forget your commandments  
Mold your elements  
Into lethal weapons  
Slay and maim our neighbor  
Destroy his home and lands

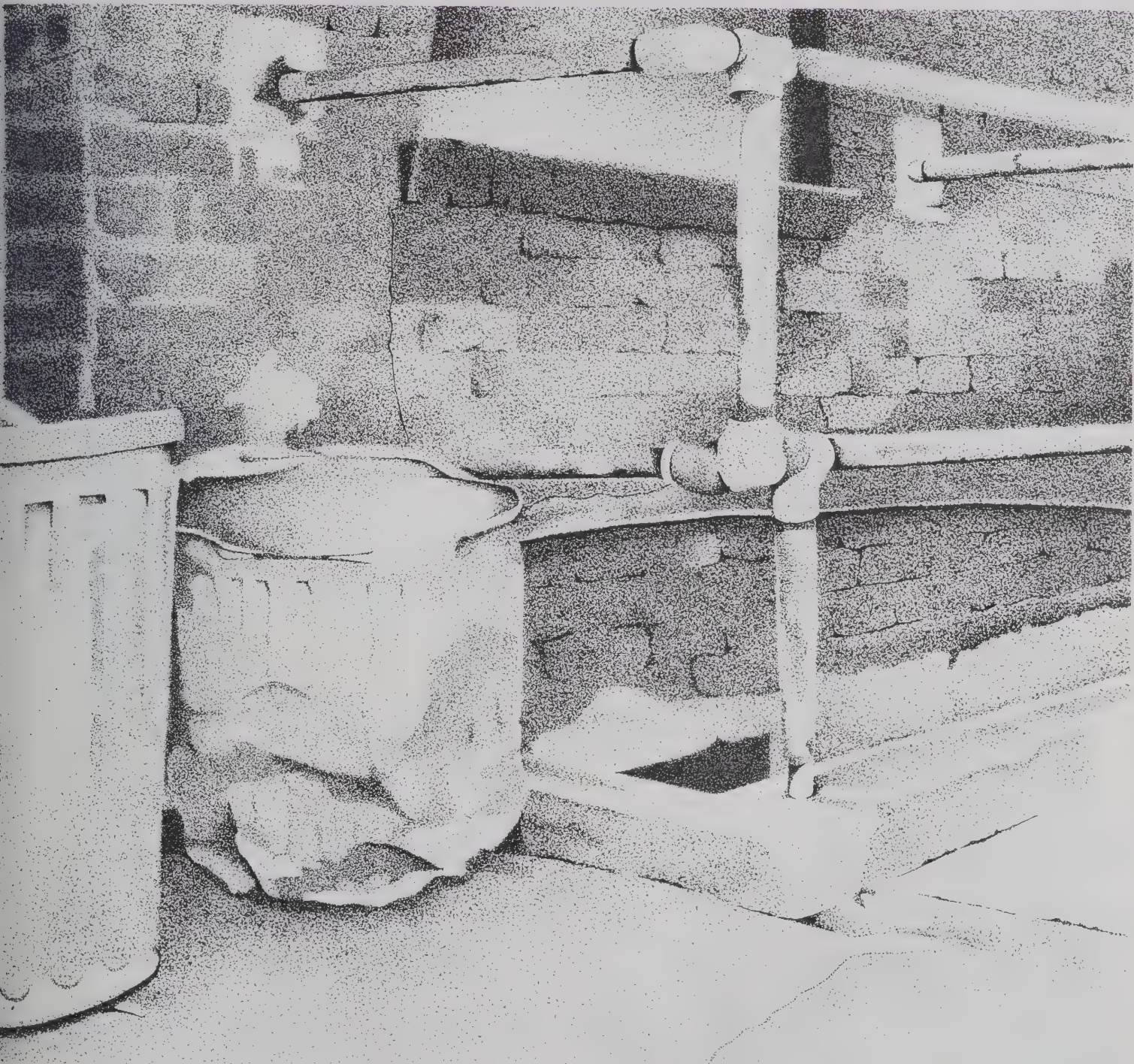
We neglect and waste your soil  
Pollute your streams  
Poison your air  
Decimate your forests  
Kill your animals

Animals foul not their nest  
Destroy not their habitat  
Kill not their own.  
I think I could turn  
and live with the animals.



*Second place  
artwork*





James Baker



# The Tiny Manipulator

Nancy K. Helms

*She* first came into my life when I was twenty-two and she was fifty. A tiny, elf-like creature, her black hair framed the mischievous face of an Irish pixie. Her favorite nephew and I were to be married, and, since she was his favorite aunt, we launched a friendship that lasted almost thirty years. Over those years I benefited from her sage counseling; the very first bit of advice she gave me was, "Never let your right hand know what your left hand doeth," she quoted with the most innocent, wide-eyed expression.

Later, I learned she was the "baby" of twelve children. Not until her declining years, however, did I understand what her siblings and cousins had always maintained: That she was the epitome of a secretive, devious, manipulative female with the beguiling ways of an innocent child. Even so, she was admirable because of her self-reliance and practicality in the face of hardships endured after she entered the business world and during her difficult marriage. In short, she was like those steel magnolias we southerners like to talk about . . . those wily, woolly women who seem to survive almost any trying circumstance and land, like the

**"...she was like  
those  
steel  
magnolias  
we  
southerners  
like to talk  
about..."**

falling cat, on their feet. Once right-side up, they sneak a look around to be sure no one is watching, give their girdles a yank, straighten their chapeaux, then walk away with dignity — heads up and eyes straight ahead.

Most of this is figuratively speaking, of course, but there is an element of truth to it. I can look back to a few times that I was completely taken in by her manipulation. There was no limit to my chagrin when I would later discover my gullibility.

The fact was, I thought I was too discerning to be taken in. It all goes to prove that we rarely know ourselves as well as we think we do.

Once, she called to see if I'd like to spend the afternoon over tea and chitchat. She wanted to show me some family pictures, too. And, "Oh, by the way, I may ask Mary and Ellen to come over. So do wear that lovely navy crepe dress you bought in the French Room. That front panel of tucking is really striking." I went, and I wore the lovely navy dress. But Mary and Ellen had "called to say they couldn't come, so let's walk down the street to see Mrs. Wilton. She's making a dress for me and needs to mark the hem."

We walked the block to Mrs. Wilton's apartment and stayed quite a while. First she marked the hemline of the new dress, then she served tea and coffee cake. Afterwards, there were a few

pieces of bric-a-brac she insisted on showing me. Altogether, it was an enjoyable afternoon.

As I walked Aunt Alice back to her apartment, she confided that Mrs. Wilton wasn't a dressmaker at all. "She's really a modiste, and a talented one. I'd have to pay more than I can afford for ready-made clothes because of my short stature. But she can go to Montaldo's or Belk's French Room, look casually at any dress there, and remember every detail long enough to go home and copy it. She adapts regular sizes to my figure and keeps me clothed most stylishly at a fraction of what I would pay in the fashion shops. She buys fine laces and buttons on sale and uses them in such a way that there is no other garment like mine!"

Twenty-five years later, after Aunt Alice's funeral, her family asked if I would mind taking her clothes to one or two of our retirement homes. I could "sort through them and discard the unwearables, giving only those that would make someone feel good." Finally, the day came that I found time to separate and box them.

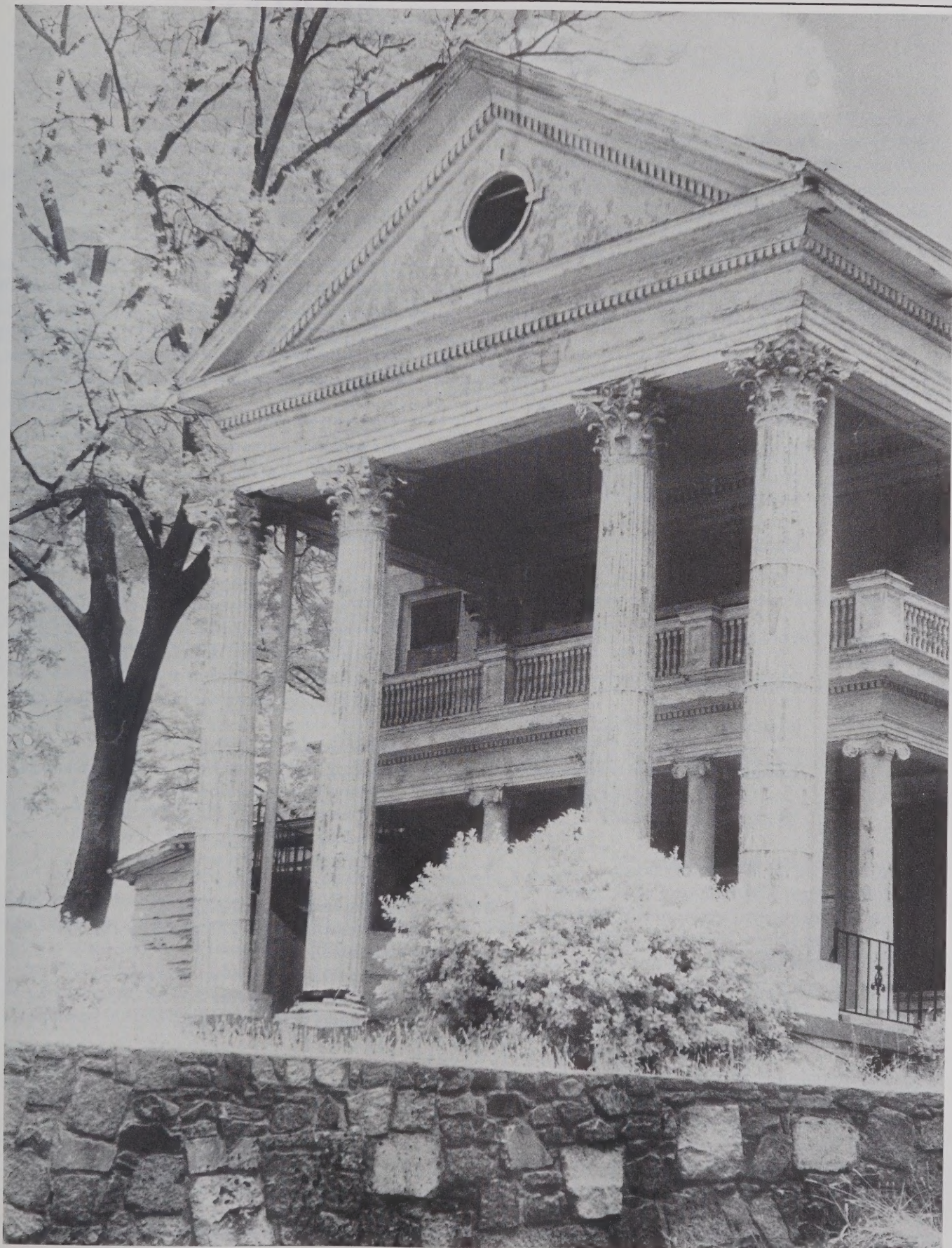
After an endless morning of picking and choosing, and even mending a few, I neared the bottom of the pile. Lifting the next one and examining it for ripped seams to mend, I suddenly thought, "This one seems vaguely familiar." Looking more carefully, I discovered that the handsome, black voile dress was an exact copy — front panel of tucking and all — of the "lovely navy" I'd worn to Aunt Alice's and Mrs. Wilton's that long-ago afternoon.

What was it she used to say? "Never let your right hand know what your left hand doeth?"

*Second place  
short story*



## House



Troy Brailey

Keystone 33



## SPRING EQUINOX

Nancy K. Helms

When young, I thought

Death came on frosty tiptoe  
in winter's bleak and  
icy stillness.

Now I'm old and see

it comes mostly in early spring:  
In spring, when Life's green,  
blustery surge pulls hard enough  
to snap the fragile cord  
that binds us here.

What lovelier time to go,

ushered by symphonic sound  
and color, as if the  
best were saved  
'til last!

## APOLOGY

Maureen Ryan Griffin

I didn't mean to. Your Kansas stretch  
of I-80 was just too dull and flat,  
the bird's swoop too quick, the squeal  
of braking wheels too little too late.  
A thud, a soft jolt. I knew  
I was innocent no longer.

I prayed the proof would  
blow away, fall on some  
anonymous span of asphalt.  
When I pulled into a gas station,  
found the limp mass of feathers  
clinging to the grill, sin upon sin,

I asked the woman at the register  
for someone, anyone, to clear it away.  
And didn't stop her  
When she called for you, her son,  
who couldn't have been more than nine.  
"Get that dead bird off this girl's car."

"Yes, ma'am." You were obedient.  
But I saw your face, your inadvertent flinch.  
The memory haunts me, all these years later:  
You, forced into my definition,  
your mother's definition of  
manhood, dropping the bird into a trash can.

What would I have learned,  
cradling that broken body in my own hands,  
burying it in a wildflower field?  
That lesson, though I thrust it away  
that dusty afternoon, waits for me still  
like a snowdrop's heart in winter earth

waits, under this apology  
I've never made—to the bird, to the boy  
you were, even to  
that part of me that hides in fear—  
this mute apology for  
the songs that go unsung.





## About Our Jurors

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### Art And Photography

R. Eric Anderson is a Professor of Visual Arts in painting and design at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He is also the Chairperson of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Art Commission, which is responsible for the Public Art Program. He has exhibited regionally and nationally, and is included in numerous public and private collections. His BFA is from Miami of Ohio, and his MFA in painting and sculpture is from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York.

### Poetry

Dannye Romine is Book Editor of *The Charlotte Observer*. Her poems have appeared in *Paris Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Shenandoah*, *Gettysburg Review* and in current issues of *Southern Poetry Review*.

### Fiction And Nonfiction

Helen Copeland has published three juvenile novels, a picture book, and short stories in *Cosmopolitan*, *Crucible*, *St. Andrews Review*, *Pembroke*, *Carolina Quarterly*, and *The New Renaissance*. Her poetry has appeared in *Christian Science Monitor*, *Saturday Review*, *Southern Poetry Review* and other magazines. A collection of her poems, *Endangered Specimen and Other Poems from a Lay Naturalist*, was published in 1988 by St. Andrews Press.



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## 1992 Submission Information:

Submissions will be accepted in the Spring, 1992. You must be a registered CPCC student during at least one of these quarters to be eligible: Fall, 1991, or Winter or Spring, 1992. All work must be previously unpublished; the writers/artists retain all rights to their work. Attach a typed 3x5 card to each entry with the title, writer's name, address and telephone number.

Entries are judged anonymously by judges outside the CPCC community. The tentative release date for the '92 KEYSTONE is mid-October, 1992.

For more information call Mary Murchison at 342-6665 or stop by Taylor Hall 205.



